



Firefighter Appreciation

P8-13

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT

Your weekly source of news, views and entertainment

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TMX investigating historical contamination P7

RV Music Fest looking for volunteers P18

Thursday July 18, 2024

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A Dunster woman's connection to the deadly 2018 California Camp Fire See P13



Dragonflies are often seen as symbols of change and new beginnings, which can be reassuring to someone who is grieving. In addition, dragonflies are known for their short life spans, which can remind us that even though our loved ones are no longer with us, they will always be in our hearts. It is believed that dragonflies are connected to the spiritual world. A deceased loved one or a guardian angel is believed to be indicated by these small symbols. These serve as a visual reminder that your loved ones are nearby. The presence of a dragonfly can also signify that a departed loved one is sending a message. /SANDRA JAMES

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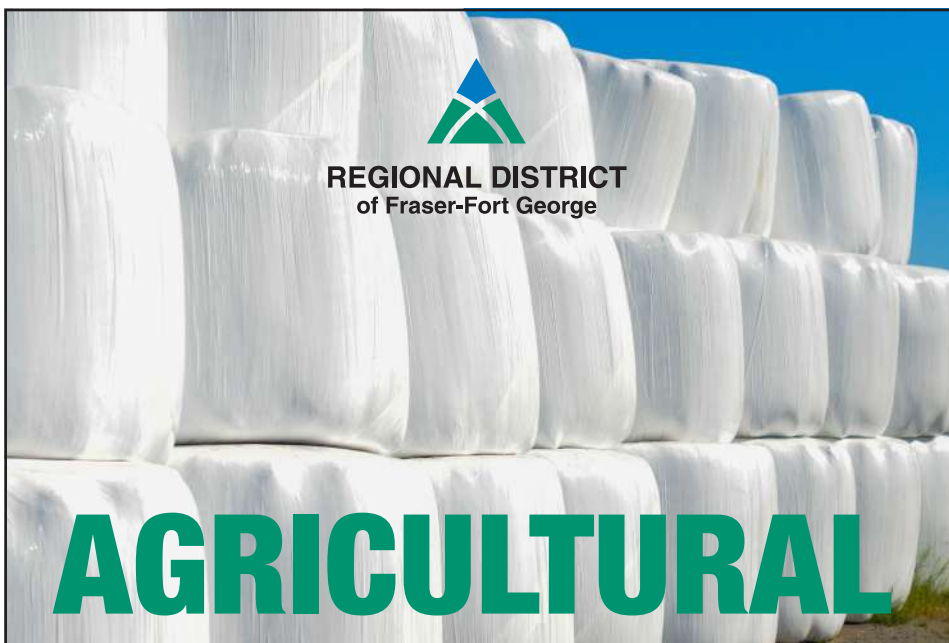
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REGIONAL DISTRICT
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AGRICULTURAL PLASTIC RECYCLING

When farmers are finished with agricultural plastics like baler twine and bale wrap, disposal can be a challenge. Usually, the used materials are stored on farms or end up in the landfill, but a pilot program operated by Cleanfarms, in partnership with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, aims to change this. Farmers can participate at no cost by picking up Cleanfarms collection bags at the McBride Regional Transfer Station for each type of material and returning them when full to the transfer station when full. Cleanfarms' contractors pick up the materials and transport them to recycling facilities in Canada and the USA to be processed and reused in new products like plastic bags and car parts.

1. PICK UP COLLECTION BAG

Farmers can pick up collection bags at the McBride Regional Transfer Station.

2. SORT MATERIALS

Use separate bags for twine, bale wrap and silage film. Shake off debris and dirt to clean the materials before bagging.

3. DROP OFF FULL BAGS

Farmers can bring full bags of clean, separated material back to the McBride Regional Transfer Station.

4. MATERIALS TRANSPORTED FOR RECYCLING

The materials collected are baled, consolidated and then transported to recycling facilities.

This is one of three Cleanfarms recycling pilot programs taking place in the province. The others are in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and the Peace River Regional District, and each program is slightly different, depending on the type of local farming. Cleanfarms' overall goal is to expand these pilots into permanent programs across the country to achieve zero agricultural plastic waste in landfills.

To learn more, visit www.cleanfarms.ca

This pilot program is made possible by grant funding from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada's Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program. The Regional District's share of the funding is from the Economic Development Budget that supports advancing of the economic well-being of electoral areas and neighbouring communities.

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Columbia Basin Trust may face “eight-figure cost” to repair generating station

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) may have to reduce its delivery of benefits program over the next year to pay for repairs at the Arrow Lakes Generating Station, says President and CEO Johnny Strilaeff.

A critical mechanical problem with one of the station’s turbines was discovered during an annual inspection, Strilaeff told Valemount Council during last Tuesday’s meeting. The organization won’t find out if insurance will cover the cost of repairing the turbine until September, by Strilaeff’s estimation.

In a follow-up interview with The Goat, Strilaeff said the Arrow Lakes Generating Station is an important investment for the nonprofit. CBT, along with the Columbia Power Corporation, owns four hydroelectric generators: the Waneta Expansion Generating Station, the Brilliant Expansion Generating Station, the Brilliant Dam and Generating Station, and the Arrow Lakes Generating Station.

Altogether, these stations make up about 75 per cent of the CBT’s annual revenue, Strilaeff told The Goat.

“The management of these investments generates financial returns that are then available to not only support the organization, but are critically important to provide benefits to basin residents and communities,” he said.

Without the Arrow Lakes Generating Station, the CBT could lose out on millions of dollars a year, he added.

These repairs aren’t just necessary for the Trust to get a return on investment, though: according to Strilaeff, neglecting the turbine’s mechanical issues could have disastrous consequences.

“If the equipment problem that we uncovered is left unchecked, it could lead to a catastrophic failure of the unit that would damage a lot of the facility and also result in the discharge of about 8,000 litres of oil into the Columbia River,” he said. “It was not a decision point of whether or not we’d undertake the repairs, it was ‘We need to undertake the repairs.’”

Because talks with the station’s insurers are still ongoing, Strilaeff said he can’t disclose details about the exact cost of repairs, or the mechanical issue itself. However, the CBT would be looking at an eight-figure bill without insurance coverage, according to him.

This potential financial burden is not an existential threat to the organization, Strilaeff

says, but it may significantly impact the Trust’s benefits delivery program over the next year.

“What’d we’d have to do for a short period of time – probably just this year – is reduce the number of dollars for what we generally describe as delivery of benefits,” he told The Goat.

“Delivery of benefits” refers to the funding streams the Trust makes available to community organizations, he added.

“We would have to potentially defer contributions to some programs, we may have to delay the start of some programs, or potentially reduce funding for programs in the current year,” he said. “So there’s a series of different things, but ultimately it would mean our budget in the current year would have to be reduced, as that money would be required to deal with Arrow work.”


While Strilaeff says the situation is unfortunate, he sees it as emblematic of the Trust’s self-sufficiency.

“It’s a reminder to everybody that Columbia Basin Trust is a self-sustaining organization,” Strilaeff said. “We don’t receive money from tax revenue or some other source, it has to come from our investments, and from time to time there can be challenges with those investments... It’s not something that makes me smile, but nor is it something that makes me fear for the future.”

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FIRE BAN

A province-wide campfire prohibition has taken effect, with the exception of Haida Gwaii Forest District. For more information, please visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/fire-bans-and-restrictions/prince-george-fire-centre-bans>.

The Village follows provincial prohibitions and residents are reminded, in addition to avoiding campfires, to remove sources of dry fuel from yards. Branches and other yard waste can be disposed of at the transfer station.

Village Updates

- The Village of Valemount is happy to announce the upcoming launch of our Clean Air website on July 22, 2024. The new site is dedicated to promoting cleaner air, with valuable resources, actionable tips and community initiatives aimed at improving air quality in the valley. To access the new platform, please visit our website at www.valemount.ca, and click on the “Clean Air Website” button on the main page.
- The new stop lines painted on Main Street are in preparation for the change in traffic pattern coming soon. Please watch for traffic signs and follow the directions accordingly.



PERMISSIVE TAX EXEMPTIONS NOTICE OF APPLICATION

2025 Permissive Tax Exemption Applications

Section 224 of the Community Charter, gives Council the authority to exempt certain land and/or improvements from municipal property taxes. Council considers Permissive Tax Exemptions for non-profit organizations that contribute to the well-being of Village residents, make improvements to the quality of life for residents, and/or are an extension of Village Services.

A new application must be completed every year and must be accompanied by all required documentation. The deadline for applications to be received by the Tax Office is **July 31st, 2024**.

To be eligible for a permissive tax exemption an organization must comply with the guidelines and be approved by Council.

Applications are now available at our office located at 735 Cranberry Lake Road or online www.valemount.ca.


Village of Valemount – Job Opportunities

Please visit <https://valemount.ca/village-office/job-postings/> to view job opportunities within the municipality.

Valemount Museum Children’s Program

The Valemount Museum is offering a summer program, for children between the ages of 6 and 12, with themed activities, crafts, games and more. This program runs from July 12th to August 23rd, every Friday from 2:00pm to 3:00pm.

Sign up at the Museum, 1090 Main Street, or email museum@valemount.ca.



Hours of Operation as of July 1st:

Visitor Information Centre

Mondays to Fridays: 8:30am to 4:30pm
 Thursdays: 8:30am to 7:00pm
 Saturdays: 10:00am to 3:00pm
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Valemount Museum

Thursdays to Mondays: 10:00am to 4:30pm
 Tuesdays & Wednesdays Closed

735 Cranberry Lake Road
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Editorial

The Goat isn't going anywhere



By Spencer Hall
Editor & Owner
goatnewspaper@gmail.com

Lately I've had a few people approach me concerned that the Goat may close.

I want to reassure the community that The Goat is not closing, nor do we have any plans to do so. While the building we occupy at 1170 5th Avenue has been put up for sale, I still own Rocky Mountain Goat Media Inc. and do not plan to sell the business anytime in the foreseeable future.

I have also taken a second job at IGA to bolster my own personal finances — try buying a house while saving for a wedding in this economy.

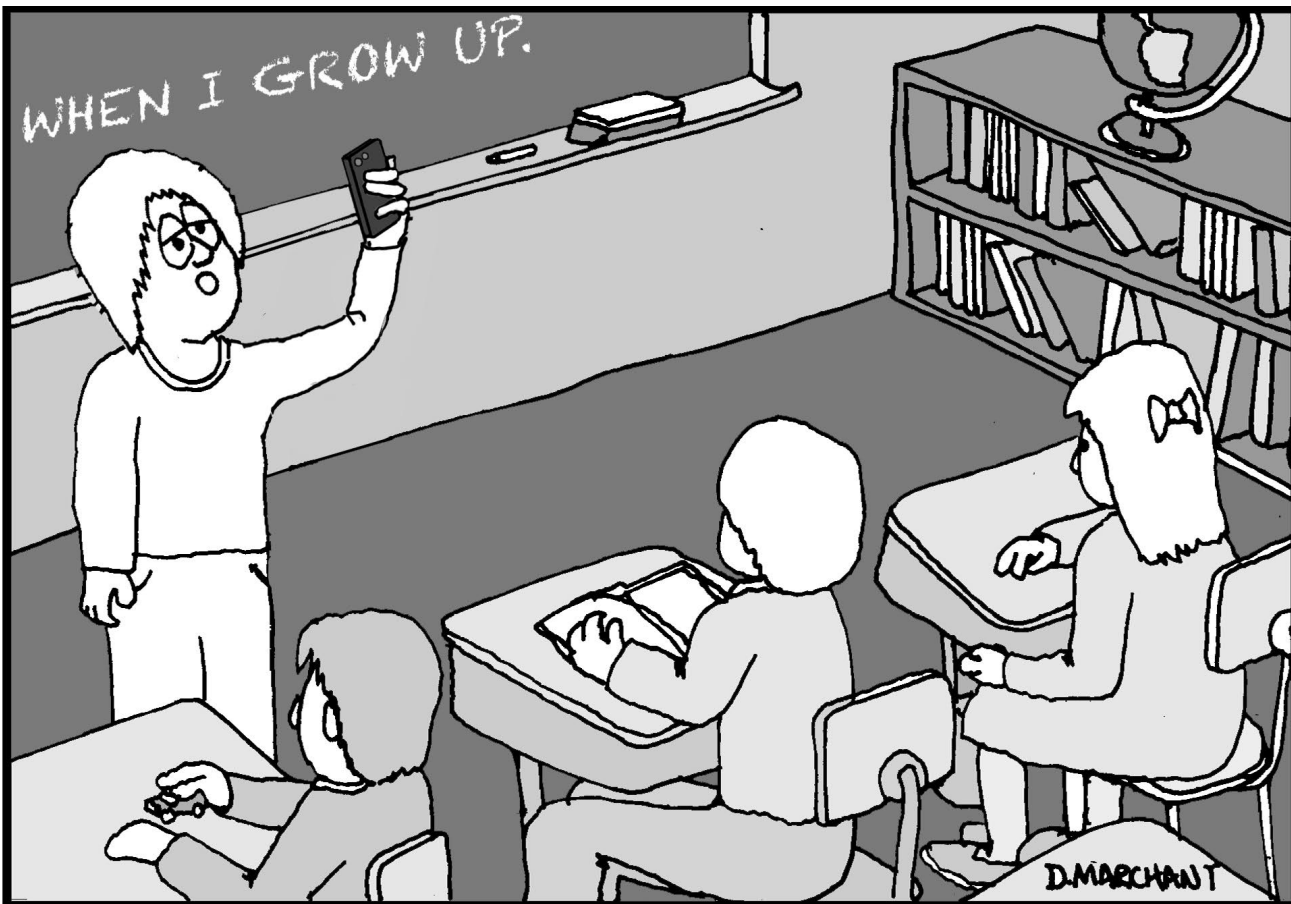
The Goat will continue to do what we've always done: keep our readers informed about the stories that impact them.

It is a privilege to do what we do and it wouldn't be possible without the support of the communities we serve and readers like you.

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In my opinion it is very dog-in-the-manger of ScotiaBank to install an ATM in McBride.

When ScotiaBank announced they were abandoning the Village we begged for an ATM and were summarily refused. Instead we got a sterile letter saying we were welcome to spend four hours on a wilderness highway, winter and summer, for the privilege of banking with ScotiaBank. Now that there is a chance a full service business will come to McBride, suddenly an ATM is viable.

Unless a special security drawer is installed it is difficult to see how pouches of deposits can be made. And how long will it take for a person to attend the ATM to refill the cash and collect the deposits? Weekly? Monthly? During which time the financial business of societies and outlets will be on hold for the pleasure of

ScotiaBank. And what about coin?

To abandon small towns because ScotiaBank didn't make ENOUGH profit one quarter was crue and thoughtless. To deliberately interfere with our chance of having full service again is greedy and childish.

D. Simpson
McBride

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Global Thoughts

Trump: Neither Unique nor Irreplaceable

BY GWYNNE DYER



Gwynne Dyer is a Canadian-born independent journalist whose column is published in more than 175 papers in 45 countries.

Almost everybody who feels obliged to comment about the attempted assassination of Donald Trump is currently insisting that 'violence has no place in American politics', but of course it has. Four US presidents have been assassinated while in office, and three others (now including Trump) have been injured in assassination attempts.

Seven presidents out of forty-five have been killed or wounded by a would-be assassin's bullet. That's a higher casualty rate than American soldiers suffered in any war of the past century. Violence plays a considerably larger role in American politics than it does in other developed countries, but it's not clear why.

For want of a better answer, we're left with the default. All those American presidents were shot by guns, which are universally available in the United States but rare elsewhere. The US has at least the same share of fanatics and nut-cases as other countries, so what did you expect?

The more interesting question is whether assassinations really change the course of history all that much. Intuition says yes, but historical experience says probably not.

Intuition says that the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, just after his victory in the American Civil War, delayed the genuine emancipation of American blacks by

at least a century.

Realism says the 'reconstruction' of race-based attitudes and institutions, especially in the South, was bound to take three or four generations no matter who was president. Indeed, the job is still not finished.

Intuition says the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 was a tragedy that prolonged the Vietnam war and opened the road to power for the criminal Richard Nixon.

Realism says that Kennedy might not have won the Democratic presidential nomination, that if he did he might not have won the election – and if he had it would probably have taken him just as long to end the war as it actually took Nixon. True, there would have been no Watergate scandal, but so what?

And what if Saturday's bullet had hit Donald Trump about two fingers' width to the right and blown his brains out? Half the US population would be enraged and the other half would be secretly relieved, but how much would really be changed?

The Republican Party in the US would still be much farther to the right than it was ten years ago, and it's sheer nonsense to believe that Donald Trump was the sole cause for that slide into crude nationalism and populism.

Boris Johnson in Britain,
Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil,

Marine Le Pen in France, Narendra Modi in India and half a dozen other populist leaders have been peddling similar falsehoods to similar demographic groups in deniable partnership with the same neo-liberal financial interests for years: Donald Trump is not unique, nor is he irreplaceable.

We are at what may be peak neo-liberalism right now. It began its rise with the elections of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in the United States in 1980, and for the next four-and-a-half decades the gulf between the very rich and the rest grew steadily wider almost everywhere.

There was nobody to put the brakes on before this process triggered a big political backlash, because the global rich are not that well organised, The victims were always free to vote against it, but mostly did not until the damage became too obvious to ignore. That is starting to happen now.

At this late stage in the cycle, the tactics of subtle misdirection must give way to the cruder distractions of nationalism and populism, and the Trumps and Johnsons of the world get their time on the stage. But they are stereotypes filling roles, not original thinkers with real plans.

As a number of people have pointed out, the graveyards are full of indispensable men.

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McBride Community Forest Corporation update

By ANDREA ARNOLD

The McBride Community Forest Corporation held an open house on June 29th. Manager Craig Pryor said that the event consisted of a luncheon, a presentation, maps for viewing and an opportunity for some open and honest conversation with MCFC members. They plan on hosting at least two open houses a year going forward.

Following the meeting, Pryor met with the Goat to provide an update on some of their current activities.

LaSalle Lake Recreation Area

“A crew from Recreation and Trails will be on site all of next week performing maintenance,” said Pryor. “We, MCFC, have already done some cleanup on the roads in the area.”

The plan is for the crew to install a new floating dock as the old one was falling apart and had been declared a safety hazard. The portion of the dock that is anchored to the shore is in good condition and will remain.

The trailhead for the trail that connects Little LaSalle to Big LaSalle will be moved from its current location, only accessible through a campsite to a more central location and the trail brushed to provide a clearer path.

The crew will also be brushing the sides of the roads, painting outhouses, adjusting signs and installing a larger recycling bin.

Pryor confirmed that they are looking into authorization and best practices for

weed control near shore in conjunction with Rec and Trails.

Lucille Hiking Trail

MCFC has contracted local contractor RT King to plan and layout a two loop trail system that will be accessible from the Lucille snowmobile parking lot, and will incorporate some of the existing trail infrastructure in the area such as Lucy's Lane.

“The plan for these hiking trails is that they are accessible for every level of experience,” said Pryor.

The project is still in its beginning stages, but Pryor said that the trails are not expected to take visitors to any viewpoint, rather provide an experience of a more densely forested area.

Teare Creek Fire Cleanup

Pryor says that they are looking into ways to help clear danger trees from the recreation areas on Teare Mountain. These trees are ones that were damaged during the fire and could fall at any time.

New Website

The MCFC recently launched their newly designed website. They contracted based web design company Orion Business Design to create a site that is clear and easy to navigate.

Tree Planting

“We have planted 390,000 trees on previously logged blocks,” said Pryor. “We are 95% planted.”

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McBride Council Report: Superior Propane presentation, water report and facade grant

MCBRIDE COUNCIL NOTES

By ANDREA ARNOLD

McBride Mayor Gene Runtz called the July 9, 2024 council meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

McBride Council heard a delegation from Superior Propane, received a report regarding the upcoming UBCM Convention and approved a facade grant for 476 Main Street at their July 9th regular meeting.

Superior Propane

A late addition to the agenda was a presentation by Darren Sigouin with Superior Propane. He began by thanking council for allowing him to address them, even with short notice. He talked about the propane tanks that are currently serving the village, and how they are nearing the end of their 25 year life span.

He said that, as a company, they want to see other local providers also succeed, so he presented council with a proposal explaining what their costs are for not only service, but also the replacement of the existing ageing out tanks. He said that if they were to have the contract to serve the community, the switch out of the old and reconnecting of the new would come at no charge to the community.

Another aspect he wanted to make clear is that by providing the village with extensive pricing information, they want to provide other providers an opportunity to meet their pricing, providing all clients with competitive and fair price options.

UBCM

Council moved to receive the report called “2024 Union of BC Municipalities Convention - Meeting Requests” for information and discussion. Council also moved to consider additional UBCM 2024 Convention meeting requests with Provincial Government MACC Staff (Ministries, Agencies Commissions and Corporations)

Community War Memorial Fund Grant

One of the items in the “for information” portion of the agenda called for action on the part of Council. Council moved to accept the report regarding the Community War Memorial Fund. CAO Jeanette MacDougall explained that the reason for this was that the deadline for an application.

Water Report

Council approved the Village of McBride 2023 Annual Water Report. The report stated that in 2023 the McBride Water System supplied 142,205,680 litres of potable water to approximately twelve hundred (1200) persons. This year's annual water consumption has increased by 210,000 litres. Much of the increase was

attributed to several water main breaks during the winter months.

Facade grant & signage

Council approved a request from Mazereeuw Contracting for 50% of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 for facade improvements at 476 Main Street.

Council also approved their request for a hanging sign although there were some points missing within the current bylaw addressing hanging signs in relation to the zone in which they are being used.

Office closure

Council passed a motion allowing the Village of McBride office be closed to the public on Friday July 19th for the purpose of vetting, organising and/or disposing of Village documentation.

Council moved to proceed to an in-Camera Council meeting for consideration of matters of the Community Charter related to: section 90 (1) (c) labour relations or other employee relations, and (k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal services that are at their preliminary stage and that in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harem the interests of the municipality if they were held in public.

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Valemount Council: CBT updates, RV use, infrastructure funding

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Valemount Council heard a delegation from Columbia Basin Trust, discussed RV use in the village, and authorized an agreement with the Union of B.C. Municipalities to receive over \$55,000 in funding for infrastructure at their July 9th regular meeting.

Mayor Owen Torgerson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Council moved to amend the evening's agenda by adding a request for decision report which would authorize the mayor and corporate officer to sign the 2024-2034 Canada Community Building Fund Agreement on behalf of the Village.

After adopting minutes from council's June 25th regular meeting and the June 19th special meeting, council heard from the evening's delegation.

Delegation

Updates from Columbia Basin Trust

Johnny Strilaeff, President and CEO of Columbia Basin Trust, gave a presentation on the work the organization has done over the past few years. The Trust used to provide annual organizational updates to local governments, but paused the practice during COVID restrictions. According to Strilaeff, annual updates will continue from now on.

After a year and a half of community consultation, the Trust renewed its Columbia Basin Management Plan in February. The plan, available on the Trust's website, outlines strategic priorities for the Trust over the next 10 years, such as continuing to grow the Trust's endowment and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Peoples in the region.

Throughout 2024, the Trust will work on an implementation framework which will establish actions for the organization to take so it can achieve these goals. This may include the creation of new programs, which will be announced in the fall and winter, according to Strilaeff.

Strilaeff highlighted nine Valemount-area projects for which the Trust partnered with community organizations during 2023 and 2024, such as the installation of backup generators for the Valemount Community Hall and the Robson Valley Community Services' Seniors Outreach Activity Program.

Strilaeff also told Council that the Trust may have to reduce its delivery of benefits program within the next year, meaning there may be less financial support available for community organizations. A mechanical issue at the Arrow Lakes Generating Station may be an "eight-figure impact" on the Trust's finances, according to Strilaeff – if the cost of repairs is not covered by insurance, the Trust will have to use money from the delivery of benefits program to pay for repairs. Read more about the damaged turbine in this week's issue.

Councillor Hugo Mulyk said he looks forward to the Trust continuing its collaboration with community organizations over the next year. Councillor Pete Pearson asked if there is a timeline for when the Trust will know whether repairs will be covered by insurance, and Strilaeff said it will likely be in early- or mid-September.

Torgerson asked Strilaeff to clarify the Trust's role amid the Columbia River Treaty negotiations. The treaty, which governs how the U.S. and Canada share the river water flow, and the hydroelectricity and money generated from the river, is currently being updated.

Strilaeff said the Trust acts as a liaison between basin residents and the negotiators on the Local Government Committee by providing information sessions about the treaty. However, the Trust does not play a direct role in the negotiations.

After moving to receive the delegation, Council moved on to administrative reports.

RV Use

Residents John and Sherral Shaw applied for a Temporary Use Permit to use an RV as a place of residence while their house is being constructed.

Previously, the Village's Temporary Residential Structures Policy allowed for RVs to be used as residences, as there was a housing shortage during pipeline construction. With more accommodations available now that pipeline work is coming to a close, and because RVs do not meet the BC Building Code requirements for a permanent residence, Council moved to repeal this policy during their May 14th meeting.

According to the staff report, feedback from the fire department said the RV poses a fire and safety hazard since additional heating sources were installed in the vehicle. Additionally, the Village's Building Inspector confirmed the RV is not suitable as year-round living quarters pursuant to the BC Building Code. As such, staff recommended against giving initial approval to the Temporary Use Permit application.

"There are other options for parking an RV long term through the spring, summer, and fall months at nearby campgrounds," the report reads. "Some may also offer year-round camping options."

Councillors Pete Pearson and Hugo Mulyk moved to follow the recommendation.

"I think we've already dealt with this as far as moving forward from the need for the (Temporary Use Permits) with the pipeline residency situation," said Pearson. "I think there are other options, so I support the recommendation."

Mulyk said he agreed with Pearson's comments about the permits, and he believes there are other accommodation options for the Shaws.

Council unanimously voted not to give the application initial approval.

5th Avenue cabin renovation

As previously reported in The Goat, RVCS is preparing to renovate its property at 1444 5th Avenue. This includes the replacement of the front left portion of the building, which is an old cabin lacking proper foundation that the rest of the building was built around. As such, Co-Executive Directors of RVCS Donalda Beeson and Jana MacMaster applied for a development permit to make these changes.

Staff recommended that the application be approved, on two conditions:

"That an Encroachment Agreement be required for the parking along 5th avenue that is located on the Village Road right-of-way."

"That 'small vehicle parking only' signs be posted for

the parking located to the front of the building."

According to CAO Anne Yanciw, encroachment agreements are used to delegate responsibilities for property care – such as clearing snow – when someone's property extends onto another property. Beeson and MacMaster propose using existing Village parking spaces on 5th Avenue as their accessible parking spaces because they are closer to the building's ramp and door, which would require an encroachment agreement.

The Public Works Superintendent recommended adding "small vehicle parking only" signs near the 5th Avenue parking spaces so access to the nearby Bigfoot Trail will not be impeded by large parked vehicles.

"I support the application," Councillor Pearson said. "I guess my biggest concern is, we're losing the log cabin. A little piece of history is gonna go away, but other than that I support the recommendation (to approve the application)."

Councillor Mulyk agreed that removing the cabin is unfortunate.

"That (building) has been here a long time," he said. "But it's not suitable in its current state, so it's time to move on."

Council unanimously approved the development permit application. Now, staff will draft and enter into an Encroachment Agreement for RVCS to use the parking spaces in the Village right-of-way.

Community Building Fund

Valemount will be receiving money from the Canada Community-Building Fund each year over the next decade. The fund, administered as part of an agreement between Canada, British Columbia, and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), is meant to provide long-term, predictable funding for local governments to dedicate to infrastructure projects, according to the UBCM's webpage on the fund.

The amount of funding the Village will receive will change year-to-year based on a formula outlined in the Community Works Fund Agreement. This year, Valemount will receive \$55,657.

In order to receive this payment, the Village must provide a Council resolution authorizing the Mayor and Corporate Officer to sign an agreement between the Village and UBCM.

Council unanimously voted to authorize the signing. "It's nice to have a stable source of revenue for 10 years," Councillor Pearson said.

RVCS letter of support

RVCS is applying for the Community Places funding program from the Northern Development Initiative Trust. Money from the program will be used to improve the outdoor spaces on the RVCS property at 1444 5th Avenue, according to a letter to Council from Co-executive Director Donalda Beeson.

In her letter, Beeson asked for a resolution from Council announcing their support of the application.

Council unanimously approved a resolution to provide a letter of support for the application.

Adjournment

Torgerson moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Trans Mountain investigating historical contamination near Valemount

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Trans Mountain will begin investigating a historical contaminated site eight kilometres east of Valemount on July 22nd. The investigation, meant to determine the impacts of the contamination, will include the installation of eight groundwater monitoring wells.

This will entail drilling boreholes with power tools and hand augers within 30 metres of a body of water. According to the company's Operations and Maintenance report filed with the Canada Energy Regulator, the body of water is not fish-bearing. A media spokesperson for Trans Mountain said the body of water is unnamed.

These steps are typical of pipeline operations, the company told The Goat in an email.

"Remediation of historical contamination is a standard practice when a site has been previously used for industrial or commercial purposes," the spokesperson wrote. "Work undertaken by Trans Mountain for this project will be in compliance with a site specific Environmental Protections Plan."

The company will also adhere to the Canada Energy Regulator's Remediation Process Guide, the spokesperson added. According to the guide, findings of an investigation must be shared with the Regulator in an annual report after a company issues a notice of contamination.

Wildfire Prepared Appreciated

What's in a flame?

How the BC Wildfire Service predicts wildfire behaviour

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) maintains a comprehensive dashboard of ongoing fires throughout the province, with information on the size of fires, whether they are expected to grow, and a colour-coded map of incidents throughout the province. To learn more about how the Service collects such a wide range of information in the heat of the moment, The Goat spoke with BCWS Predictive Services Specialist Andrew Simpson.

It all starts with the initial on-the-ground report, says Simpson. Fires can be reported through the BCWS app, or by calling *5555, and the BCWS makes note of any details offered in the report. Once the Service arrives at the scene, responders contribute photos and on-the-ground reports to get an idea of how the fire is behaving.

“One of the most valuable pieces of information is the images taken by our bird dogs – the planes that are up there,” Simpson said. “Even if we decide that fire is not a suitable target for an air tanker drop, there will still be a flyover with photos taken. Those photos are valuable information.”

Crews who are battling the fire on the ground also report their observations to the Service, but for bigger fires, a fire behaviour analyst is on-site to make predictions.

“That’s a true specialist in fire behaviour who is looking forward to what the fire may do,” Simpson said. “There’s two things we look at: ‘What’s the fire doing on the ground?’ And, ‘What are the fuel and weather conditions that could drive the fire behaviour?’”

Another factor influencing fire behaviour is terrain, Simpson added. This is an especially important consideration in mountainous regions like the Robson Valley.

“The very steep, dramatic topography can have dramatic effects on funneling winds,” says Simpson. “That’s where the observations of someone in the field... can be really useful in confirming – or not – what the

forecasted winds are expected to be.”

Wind speed, topography, and fuel availability are all factors taken into account in a mathematical model called the Canadian Forest Fire Behaviour Prediction System, which the BCWS uses to create a forecast of fire behaviour.

“All our firefighters have basic training in this stuff,” Simpson said of the prediction system. “These days we have a Red Book, which is a handbook that sort of guides you through it... It just gives you tables to look up, for example, what the anticipated rate of spread might be on a fire in a particular fuel type with a particular amount of wind. We’ve also recently created apps that do the same thing – you move some dials on the app and it gives you the same outputs.”

The forecasts produced with this model are similar to weather forecasts, according to Simpson: they can give a reliable short-term prediction of a fire’s behaviour, but the forecast gets less reliable for longer-term predictions.

In addition to this mathematical model, the BCWS uses computer modeling programs to predict overall potential fire spread. The Service recently added a web-based application that automatically generates modelling for multiple fires in a landscape, according to Simpson.

“It’s just another tool. It’s not by any means the magic bullet that’s going to solve all our problems,” said Simpson. “But when things get busy, it does give us the ability to get the kinds of outputs that used to take quite a bit of time to develop.”

But even computers aren’t foolproof, and the prediction system – which Simpson says was devised decades ago – has its shortcomings. It wasn’t designed to factor in long-term drought, which much of B.C. has been facing over the past two years, and there’s the chance of human error if someone incorrectly identifies what the fire’s fuel source is.

“This is why, when we issue predictions, we never say, ‘This is what the fire is going to do.’ It’s, ‘This is what we think this fire has the potential to do,’” Simpson said. “It’s a bit of a science and a bit of an art.”

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A message from your local BC United MLA

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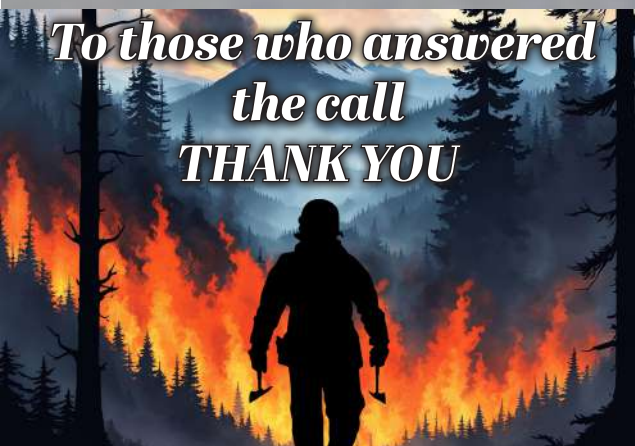



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Business & Firefighter Association

New equipment for Chu Chua Volunteer Fire Department

SUBMITTED BY SIMPCW FIRST NATION

The Chu Chua Volunteer Fire Department is a dedicated team composed of members from the Simpcw Nation and the surrounding ranches to the north of our community. We are proud to have a Simpcw employee among our ranks, further strengthening our ties to the community we serve. Our department has recently been equipped with a new Iturri Wildland 3 Bush truck, enhancing our ability to respond effectively to wildfires in the area. Every member of our team is highly trained and actively involved, understanding the critical importance of quick and efficient responses to wildfire threats.

In its fourth year, the Indigenous Initial Attack initiative has set a new provincial standard for Indigenous Initial Attack crews. This program has

already proven its worth by responding to multiple wildfires with remarkable efficiency and dedication. In addition to their firefighting efforts, the crew has been diligently working on fuel reduction projects within the Simpcw Territory. This proactive approach not only mitigates the risk of future wildfires but also demonstrates their commitment to the safety and preservation of our lands.

The collaboration between the Chu Chua Volunteer Fire Department and the Indigenous Initial Attack Crew showcases the strength and resilience of our community. By working together, we are able to provide a robust and coordinated response to wildfire emergencies, ensuring the protection of our people, properties, and natural resources. This partnership embodies the spirit of unity and preparedness that is essential for tackling the challenges posed by wildfires in our region.



Members of the Chu Chua Volunteer Fire Department stand with the department's new bush truck. / SUBMITTED



THANK YOU
to our Indigenous Initial Attack Team as well as the Chu Chua Volunteer Fire Department for all of their dedication and hard work.



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Wildfire Prepared Appreciation

No pet left behind: Are your furry family members evacuation-ready?

By RACHEL FRASER

Pets make everything a little more complicated, and evacuation preparedness in wildfire season is no exception. It's important to plan ahead to ensure that your pets are not an afterthought or an obstacle to getting out safely should a hurried evacuation be necessary.

"Prepare a go bag," said Bill Penhallurick, Manager of Emergency Response at the BC SPCA. "That is the number one thing... Probably the number one reason for people leaving animals behind is that they're not prepared to grab and go with an animal."

Checklists published by the BC SPCA and the Jasper and Valemount Veterinary Clinic recommend the bag contain at least a two-week supply of food and water, and list supplies such as waste bags, a spare litter box and litter, spare collar with id tags, leash and harness. Don't forget to stock up on consumable habitat supplies for small, caged pets. Comfort items such as blankets, beds or favourite toys are also suggested.

Include a first aid kit, any necessary medications, photos and written descriptions of pets, pet insurance information, and vet records, keeping in mind that kennels will require vaccination records.

Dunster-based vet Dr. Tom Vogel, would like cat owners in particular to always know where their pets are when there is the potential for fire. You don't want to be searching for them when time is of the essence.

Factor pet-friendly accommodations into your own evacuation planning on multiple routes, and consider whether kenneling will be required or reliably available. Keep in mind that many pet parents will likely also be evacuating and counting on the same resources. Area kennels and rescues may be overflowing.

Penhallurick says the BC SPCA can help with emergency boarding, emergency pet supplies, animal retrieval, and even care and feeding in place in the case of animals that can't be easily moved, such as aquariums. He said it's best to call the Animal Helpline (see sidebar)

for assistance and direction, rather than drop in at a location that may be busy with many evacuees.

Incorporate family members, pet-sitters and neighbours into your emergency planning in case you are not able to reach your home and pets or require their assistance.

The Jasper-Valemount Vet Clinic recommends a health check for your pet, including vaccinations and parasite treatments, in case emergency kenneling becomes necessary.

Having your pet microchipped or tattooed can ensure a speedy reunion if the unthinkable happens and you are unexpectedly separated from your pet. The BC SPCA recommends registering your pet's ID with the BC Pet Registry and double checking that your contact information is up to date.

Familiarizing your fur babies with their carriers and practicing evacuation procedures in advance with lots of treats and rewards will make the process speedier and less stressful for all involved in the event of the real thing.

Emergency Contacts:
BC SPCA Animal Helpline
- 1-855-622-7722

Veterinarians:
Jasper and Valemount Veterinary
Clinic - 1-250-566-4194 /
1-780-852-5551
Dr. Vogel, Dunster - 1-250-968-4477

**Valemount Bylaw Enforcement Officer
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Clayton Gee - 1-250-566-4435

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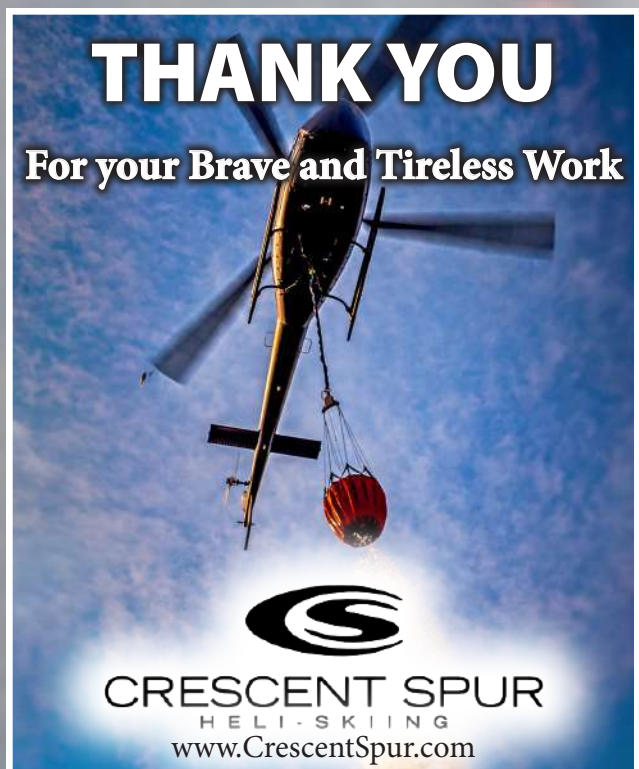
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Business & Firefighter Association



Dave Hruby, Fire & Public Safety Educator for the Regional District is now authorized as a Local FireSmart Representative. This allows him to conduct assessments for property owners to identify risks from wildfire. Once an assessment is complete, homeowners can then make decisions and changes to significantly lower the intensity of a fire and improve their home's resiliency. Hruby has planted lilacs (as seen in the photo) as well as cranberry bushes around his own home. These are some examples of fire resilient plants. Hruby says that Art Knapps is their go to for firesmart bushes, trees and shrubs. Anyone wanting to have an assessment done can reach out to either Hruby or the Regional District 250-870-4400. /ANDREA ARNOLD



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Wildfire Prep Firefighter A



Wildfire crews from Robson Valley Fire Zone working wildfire G30612 near Lempiere Creek in June 2023. / BC WILDFIRE SERVICE

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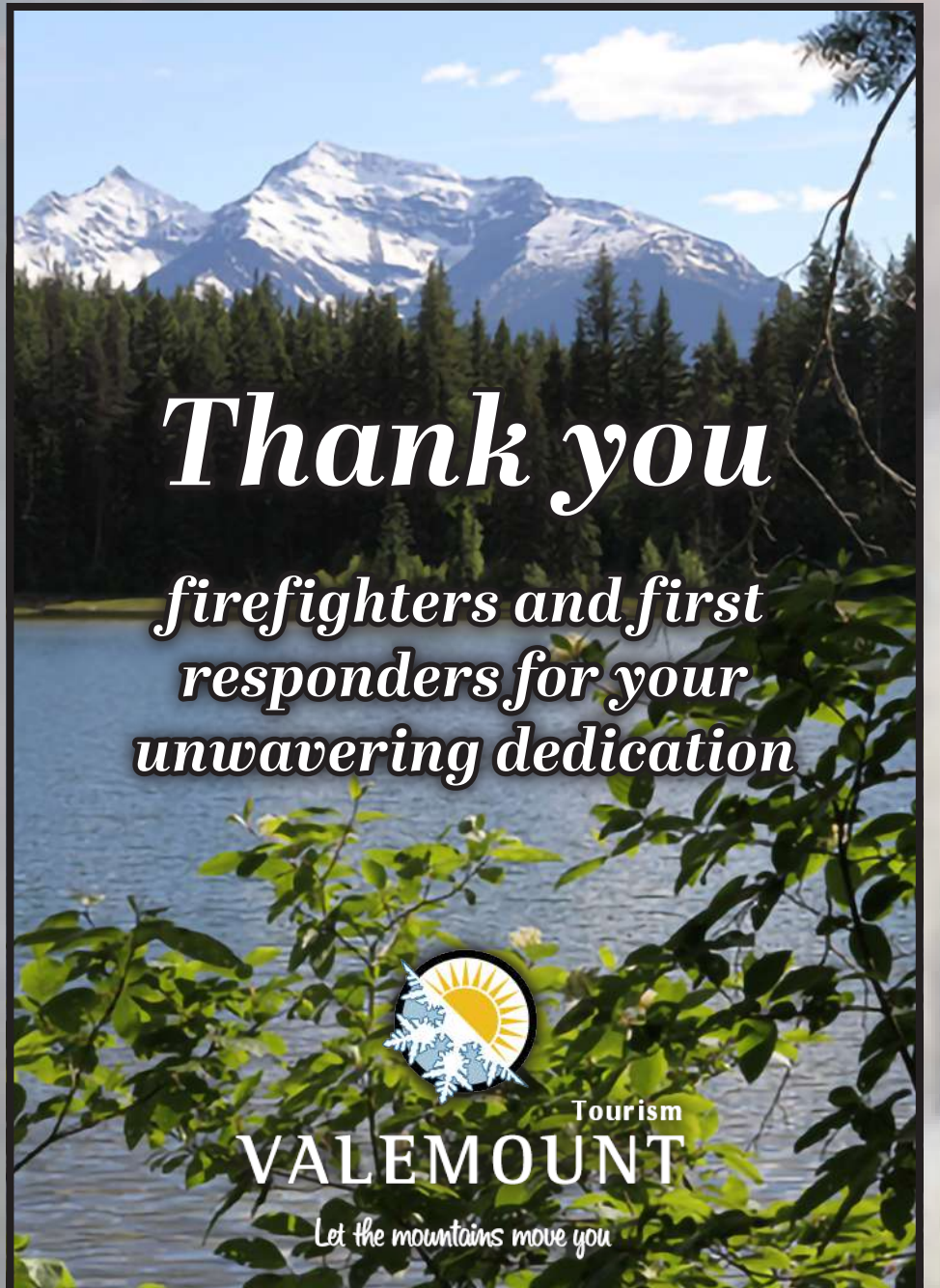


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Six minutes to lose everything

Dunster resident recalls her experience with the deadly California Camp Fire

By KERRY HALL

It is not easy to describe to people what it is like to have lost everything in Camp Fire on November 8th, 2018. What immediately strikes most people is the loss of property, pictures, family heirlooms, vehicles, art. Yet what we experienced was so much more than the loss of things. We lost our lifestyle and all that fostered it, habits and routine, pets and hobbies, community, neighborhood, and friends.

By the fall of 2018, we had lived in our home on the mountain ridge for 17 years. We moved from Vacaville, CA when our youngest of four children was just 2 months old. We immediately began to make the house our home, redoing floors, removing wallpaper, replastering walls, and ceilings, painting, and repairing. Outside we tore out overgrown jungles and replaced them with flowering shrubs and groundcover. I collected almost a dozen different varieties of hydrangeas, locally propagated Iris, and heirloom lilacs my mom gave us or that we reclaimed from old area homesteads. Our yard was prime for wildlife viewing and bird watching. We constructed pathways, pergolas, and archways, and planted vegetable, cactus, flower, and herb gardens. A dry rock bed that simulated a creek ran under a footbridge to a small pond. During the unprecedented drought, the fresh water attracted racoons, skunks, deer,

and foxes. There were feeders for wild birds, the Steller's Jays I fed by hand. We raised chickens and built them a gorgeous coop and fenced yard.

The morning of the Camp Fire began as most mornings for us. Our daughter Emily was headed to Chico State for class. Dan, my husband was getting ready for work. I was ready to drive our youngest son, Christopher to his recital in downtown Paradise. Chris had been playing guitar with a community musical group and this performance would be evaluated as a graduation requirement. I commented on the steady sound of sirens we could hear going down Pentz, the main road. My husband said he would drive to work that way and see what was going on. I turned on the local Chico radio station to see if anything was being reported; a fire 20 miles away in an area called Pulga. The morning was bright and cloudless, but windy.

We had evacuated with much of the town before, when fire ravaged the neighboring ridge. That time our 90-year-old neighbor, a Macaw parrot, our Springer Spaniel and 4 kids were in tow. We also stayed on the ridge through evacuation warnings when fire jumped the diminishing creek and raced up the ridge a block from our house. Warnings, fires, smoke plumes and water planes were becoming more commonplace every year but especially in a year where we had seen little to no rain for 5 months. 20 miles seemed like a safe

distance away.

Dan left for work, and we promised to call each other if we heard of any updates. Less than 10 minutes passed when we received a reverse 911 call with an evacuation warning. I immediately called him to come home, the fire was serious, and the wind was blowing our way. He was home within minutes, remarking that he could see flames across the canyon. He decided to take a moment to document the house inside and out on his iPhone, a task that proved invaluable to our insurance claim. He then left to question the neighbor who taught at a Ponderosa elementary school just a mile and a half north on Pentz Road. She said the flames were already at the school and structures were burning. We all stepped outside at this point as if to validate her claim. An enormous black cloud was coming up from the canyon, the threat was real. We wasted no time in gathering ourselves and the dog while hurriedly texting family with updates. By this time the sky had grown dark and the sound of exploding propane tanks was growing louder, the smell of smoke stronger.

Emily immediately went to the basement and retrieved a large suitcase. She would fill it with her diabetes supplies. In the urgency of the moment, her passport, \$1,000 cash, and plane tickets for her trip to Los Angeles the next day would be an

CONT'D ON P19



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From Doug and Gail Miller
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VALEMOUNT COMMUNITY FOREST

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Community Events

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Family & Youth

Valemount Museum Kids Summer Program
Fridays 2-3pm. 1:30pm drop off. July 12th to Aug 23rd.
Ages 6-12. Themed activities, crafts, games and more. Sign up at the museum or email museum@valemount.ca

Mindfulness Camp - Valemount & McBride
Join RVCS Staff for this years Mindfulness Camp for 5-10 year olds! This camp includes, snacks, mental health education on topics such as big emotions and senses, games and crafts, story telling, walks, and more! At the end of the camp, children will receive a take home goody bag with information and tools on the topics we have explored! Registration is required and spaces are limited. Valemount: July 22-25 9am-12pm Centennial Park.

Summer Book Bingo McBride - Library
Book Bingo is back in 2024 at the McBride Library, with 9 challenges for you to complete by August 24th. If you complete the challenges, you will be entered into a prize draw for a grab bag of goodies, and you will be awarded 100 house points for your Summer Reading Club house. Pick up your bingo card next time you visit the library, or download it online.

Dungeons & Dragons - McBride Library
For ages 12-18, the classic fantasy storytelling game. Join us on Tuesdays from 3.30-5.00pm at the McBride Library. Bring D&D dice if you have them!

Wacky Wednesdays - McBride Library
Wacky Wednesdays is our old "Fun Fridays" summer program for kids, but on a different day! Kids aged 5-8 are invited to join us on Wednesdays from 1-2pm, and kids aged 9-13 are invited to come along from 3-4pm. We have three special Science Camp sessions that will be a combined group (starting at 1pm). Please contact us for more details or to register your child. Starts July 3rd! (see Wacky Wednesday Science Specials below for these special events which interrupt regular programming).

Wacky Wednesdays Science Specials at the McBride Library
We are offering three special Science workshops from 1-2pm for kids aged 5-13. Spaces are limited for these three science workshops, so please sign up soon. See details below:
Wed 7 Aug: Magical Science
Discover a magical force that will levitate particles. Scatter light & create illusions that will thrill your audience. Experiment with colourful teas & unusual potions on this magical science adventure.
Wed 14 Aug: Discovery Zone
Join us for an action-packed adventure where you'll explore colour chromatology, investigate why trees are important to engineers & create an

Sunshine Stories July - McBride Library
10:30-11am. An early literacy program for children ages 0-5 and caregivers. Songs, rhymes, stories and fun! In partnership with Decoda Literacy. Runs each Thursday until September 5th!

Board Teens - McBride Library
Board Teens is a new program aimed at teens (ages 12-18), who are invited to come play some of the library's many board games every Thursday from 3-5pm. Have a favourite game you like to play? Bring it with you!

Summer Reading Club - Valemount Library
At the Valemount Public Library Ages 6-12. Join us at the library every Wednesday at 1:00pm for crafts & activities during the months of July & August. Start date July 3. To register, call 250-566-4367.

Summer Weekly Challenges - Valemount Library
Complete weekly challenges and enter to win prizes at the Valemount Library! Fun for the whole family to do together.
Week 1 - Play outdoor games in library yard
Week 2 - Have a picnic
Week 3 - Decorate sidewalks with chalk
Week 4 - Go on a bike ride
Week 5 - Build a sandcastle
Week 6 - Go on a nature walk
Week 7 - Look for constellations on a clear night
Week 8 - Find a new recipe and cook it together with your family

Read to Me Club - Valemount Library
Ages 0-5. Come to the Valemount library during the months July and August and receive a reading log. Keep track of your weekly reading for a chance to win prizes.

Teen Summer Reading Bingo - Valemount Library
Ages 13-18 Come to the Valemount Library during the months July and August and receive a bingo sheet. Keep track of your reading for a chance to win prizes.

Adult Summer Reading Bingo - Valemount Library
Come to the Valemount library during the months July and August and receive a bingo sheet. Keep track of your reading for a chance to win prizes.

Summer Reading Club McBride & Valemount Valemount Library - join us at the library every Wednesday at 1pm for crafts and activities at the

Valemount Library. Ages 6-12. Register at the library. You will also receive a reading log to Keep track of your reading this summer and enter to win prizes.
McBride Library - Reading logs, stickers and bookmarks are available for kids at the library now, and this year all the family can join in, with a series of weekly challenges! Each participant will be in one of four houses: House of Unicorn, dragon, mer or griffin. Completing your reading logs and weekly challenges will earn house points, and the winning house at the end of the summer will have the medal ceremony party decorated in their honour! Call in at the library for more details.

Pancake Breakfast - Valemount
Pancake breakfast at the Valemount Legion Sundays 8 to 10:30 am. By donation!.

Oldtime Music & Dancing -Valemount
WED Oldtimers band and music night at the Golden Years Lodge in Valemount 7pm. All welcome! Play music, listen or dance.

Family Place Drop In Program - Valemount & McBride
If you have questions, are looking for parenting resources, or just need to chat, you can join us in person 9am-noon every Monday in McBride or Friday in Valemount. Our weekly targeted programming is a great way for kids ages 0-6 (with their caregivers) to play, connect, explore, and learn!

McBride on Mondays
July 22- Bouncy castle fun
July 29- Painting with marbles and salad spinners
August activities TBA

Valemount on Fridays
July 19- Bouncy castles at Centennial Park
July 26- Sing along at Centennial Park
August activities TBA

Sprouting Memories with our Families with RVCS -Valemount
Aug 22nd Let's harvest the plants we've been nurturing all summer long. No registration required for this activity for families and their young children. Further harvesting details to come later.

Infant Massage - Valemount
Come learn about the benefits and techniques for infant massage at 99 Gorse Street, RVCS on Wednesdays starting July 10 to August 28 from 10:30-11:30am. This program is subject to date changes. Registration is required as there are limited spaces available. Ages 0-12 months with an adult only (no siblings). Brought to you by the RVCS Infant Development Program. To register, please contact the office at events@rvcsbc.org 250-566-9107 (Valemount) 250-569-2266 (McBride).

Puzzle Piece Pioneers – McBride
August 29 Come do a puzzle of the world and brush up on your world geography at 942 3rd Avenue, McBride from 1-3pm. Everyone is welcome. Drop in event. Bring your questions or technology you need support with also. 250-569-2266 / events@rvcsbc.org for more info.

Senior/Adult Programs

Coffee House - Valemount
Free Drop-In/Coffee House at the Golden Years Lodge the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month 10 am -2 pm. It's open to everyone regardless of your age. If you currently have mobility issues, call CARE-A-VAN 778-915-8550 for a ride in the accessibility bus.

Donkeys n Donuts for Seniors – McBride
This popular event will now happen on Friday, August 2nd between 1-3pm. This is a drop in event for seniors/grandparents only. Due to the nature of the programs, it is for seniors to connect with animals as a therapeutic session.

Summer Walking Group – McBride
Join us for a walking group on Tuesdays throughout the summer. Whether you're a seasoned walker or just starting out, our group welcomes everyone. Walking is not only great for your physical health but also fantastic way to meet others. This group runs July 2, 9 and 30, and again August 6, 13, 20 & 27 from 2-3pm beginning from 942 3rd Avenue, McBride. Adults/seniors welcome. Contact 250-569-2266 / events@rvcsbc.org for more details.

Adult programs/events

Men's Shed Meeting - McBride
A 942 3rd Avenue in McBride. Join the guys at 3pm on the first Thursday each month. Men's Shed Canada is a volunteer based organization that aims to improve the physical and mental health of men by giving them an opportunity to meet together, socialize, create projects, and find ways to help the community. No registration required.
Email mcbriedemshed@gmail.com for more info.

Birch Tree Teachings -Valemount & McBride
July 22nd, let's get creative and learn about nature. Enjoy

an afternoon of traditional teachings on the birch tree and its uses. Adults and seniors are welcome. Registration is required: 250-566-9107 / events@rvcsbc.org. Valemount: July 15th from 12-3pm at RVCS 99 Gorse Street. McBride: July 22nd from 12-3pm at RVCS 942 3rd Avenue.

Soapstone carving workshop - Dunster
August 4 10-5pm Soapstone Carving workshop with Lisa Day (\$40). Limited space. Participants must be 13 years old and older. To register email dunsterstationmuseum@gmail.com

Glass mosaics workshop - Dunster
August 11 10-4pm Glass Mosaics with Rea Chartier (\$20). Limited space. Participants must be 13 years old and older. To register email dunsterstationmuseum@gmail.com

Pine Needle Baskets workshop - Dunster
September 22 10-4pm Pine Needle Baskets with Heather Zahn (\$20). Limited space. Participants must be 13 years old and older. To register email dunsterstationmuseum@gmail.com

Valemount Seed Library
Mon- Thurs is available in our lobby during business hours at RVCS Valemount (99 Gorse St). Office hours: Monday 10am-6pm and Tuesday to Thursday 8am-4pm. Come take free seeds to grow in your garden this summer. By saving seeds, we can maintain genetic diversity, adapt to changing environmental conditions, and save money by not having to purchase new seeds every year. For more information call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org.

Free Food Pantry - McBride
Mon-Thurs McBride RVCS (942 3rd Ave) has a FREE FOOD PANTRY that's available to all! Emergency top-up food is accessible to our clients, Family Place Drop In program and anyone who walks through the door. We share and accept donated foods that are safe and fresh for use, this project is made possible thanks to grant funding from United Way of BC, and the residents of the Robson Valley! Contact RVCS at 1-844-324-2004 or email foodsecurity@rvcsbc.org. The local Food Bank is also available: 250-569-3186.

Free Food Farm Stand and Pantry -Valemount
Open Mon- Fri, available for anyone who would like some free, fresh produce. We accept donations of unprocessed fruits and veggies also. The stand is accessible in the front lobby at RVCS Valemount (99 Gorse St) and is available to everyone- just help yourself! Emergency top-up food is accessible to our clients and anyone who walks through the door. This initiative is supported by one-time grant funding through United Way BC. For more information call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org.

Ongoing adult events

Fibre Artists - McBride
On Wednesdays the McBride Library host the Fibre Artists' group 10am-12pm: come knit, sew or crochet with us! Beginners welcome. Online option available for anyone who would like to join us that way – call the library for info on 250 569 2411.

Crafty Stitchers - McBride
Sundays 1-3 pm Crafty Stitchers meet downstairs at the Valemount Public Library, all welcome! Call 250-566-4367.

German Conversation Club - McBride
Join us on Wednesday mornings at the McBride Library for a fun German language conversational class with Lilly. All levels and abilities welcome, from beginners to advanced. For further details, call the library on 250 569 2411.

McBride Library Writing Group
Our Writing Group for adults meets every Friday afternoon 1:30-3pm. We tend to chat for the first 30 minutes about what we are working on, then we sit silently for an hour to write. Our writers are working on a range of things – novels, memoirs, poems, short stories, dissertations. Writing something? Come join us!

Tuesday Night Jam - McBride
Now playing in the CN Station Lobby, 6:15-8:30. It is an open jam; musicians, singers, and onlookers welcome. For more information call David at (250) 569-2569.

Farmer's Markets

Valemount Farmers Market
Thursdays at the Visitor Info Centre 4-7pm.

McBride Farmers Market
Fridays 11am-2pm. at the Pavilion in Steve Kolida Park. Make it Bake it Grow it or gently used items. Table space \$10.00/ wk Children under 12 \$2.00/wk. For further information contact Jackie Edwards 250 569 7101

Dunster Farmer's Market
Saturdays at the Dunster Community Hall 11:00 to 1:00. Vendors welcome - no charge for table. Burger Concession. Bedding plants, baking, crafts, odds and ends, etc.. From JULY 6-SEPT 28.

Future Events

Northwest Mud Racing Association Mud Races - Valemount
August 3rd & 4th, 2024, Join us at the Canoe River Campgrounds to watch the side by side 200ft mud drags, junior racers, blown alcohol dragsters, and the mega hill n' hole trucks. Ear protection strongly advised. The front gate does have limited supply of ear protection for sale. Saturday Races start at 1pm. Sunday Races start at Noon. Spectator gates open at 11am on Saturday. Sunday they open at 10am. We race till each truck has made or attempted two passes.

Robson Valley Music Festival - Dunster
Aug 16th-18th 2024. A family-friendly celebration of music, art and community, in Dunster BC, the heart of the Robson Valley. Huge line-up of local and international artists. Festival located on River Road. Weekend passes available for pre-purchase. www.rvmf.ca for more info.

Annual Terry Fox Trek
August 24, 2024. Trek up Mount Terry Fox in Valemount, BC in support of cancer research! Three different routes available. Register at terryfox.org/all-events/mt-terry-fox-trek/

Valemount Marina Fishing Derby
Aug 31-Sept 1st 2024 Valemount Marina Association Annual Fishing Derby. Camping available at Griffin Sawmill, Yellowjacket and Horsey Creek.

Fall Bike Fest - Valemount
Sept.13-15 A celebration of all things mountain biking. Shuttles, mini contests and social events. Please watch for the Valemount Bike Facebook page for a release of more information and ticket sales.

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PUZZLES



CROSSWORD

Answers on P13

- Across**
- Killed, in the Bible
 - ... winter of __ discontent
 - Sleep a little
 - Exorbitant, as prices
 - Avail oneself of
 - Be indebted to
 - Periphery
 - Coffee-break time
 - Meshed fabric
 - Lines on a package
 - Kind of artist
 - Common Halloween costume
 - Exclamation of bewilderment
 - It goes with "neither"
 - Kitchen back-splash material
 - Newton, for one
 - Color of Superman's cape
 - Sounds like a "Q"
 - Purse handle
 - Used a straw
 - Immobilized
 - Anonymous litigant
 - On top of everything
- else**
- Cell phone capability
 - "You __ my sunshine"
 - B&B, e.g.
 - Tale opening
 - Common door sign
 - Roulette bet
 - Run across
- Down**
- "__'s the one for me"
 - Jar sealer
 - Goad, with "on"
 - It may be found in an elevator
 - Alfresco
 - PC operator, e.g.
 - Refresh
 - Like some frying pans, 2 words
 - Inspire respect
 - Teacher's favourite
 - Wear
 - Be placed
 - In this way
 - Relative
 - Cursed number

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35				36		37		38		
		39			40					
41	42			43			44	45	46	47
48				49				50		
51				52				53		

- Idea
- Consider
- Answer
- Driveway material
- Going to happen
- Garden terrace
- Compact PC disc, 2 words
- Swimming site
- Home for the bucktoothed
- It's picked out of a mine
- Wedded
- Leading pitcher
- Ran into

This week's Venus alignment with Uranus, the planet of surprises, can bring moments when the heart seems a separate entity, like a pet, sometimes loyal and sticking close, and other times taking off in its own direction. When it feels like your heart is walking around with someone else, you have choices: You can call it back, go to where it is, or accept the void. There's no right answer, though it often helps to realize that every state of the heart is temporary.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll get something right the first time. As the sign of "beginner's luck," this happens more often for you than for others, but that's not the remarkable part. What's remarkable is that you don't let it go to your head. You humbly try things again and again, in full recognition that it's the lessons that unfold in repetition that matter.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If only life provided the same chance wedding officiants do when they say, "Speak now or forever hold your peace." But outside of formal traditions, the invitation to speak up is a rare occurrence. Instead, we have to make our own moments to say what we need to say. The impulse to do so will be strong this week.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll find yourself in a situation of mild interest, where everything looks good on paper but there's no spark. Don't act until you feel something. The opposite scenario is equally precarious -- a spark with a person or situation that makes no sense at all for your life. Wait until things are both fascinating and full of good sense.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Who makes you feel most like your true self? Who brings out a side of you that you really enjoy enacting? Who makes you feel a little surprised about who you are? As much as you may admire people, how you feel around them matters at least equally, if not more, than how you feel about them.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll shake off isolating self-consciousness. Never forget that you're part of something bigger. You'll give support to others like you're giving it to yourself, and they'll follow your lead, too. Furthermore, strategic partnerships and diverse groups with various strengths and weaknesses make individual flaws a nonissue.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll do what aligns with your values and you'll help create a more engaged community. It happens because you take initiative. Someone has to, and since openness and sharing are in your nature, you'll find it easier than others to be the one who takes a social risk. This will pay off for you time and again.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

You're not grandstanding. You're not talking about your abilities and accomplishments to blow up our own ego. You're just telling people what they need to know about you to be excited about moving forward together. Keep taking these kinds of initiatives this week. It's not just for you; it's for the sake of the whole team.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You welcome argument and discussion. You feel honored by the careful attention of others. So, anyone who takes the time to examine your logic for holes, or checks your work looking for opportunities for improvement, is giving you valuable care. You even welcome learning about things you hadn't considered yet.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You strive to do your best and reach certain goals, but even that is not enough for you. You don't feel complete until you pass a torch. Formal teaching isn't necessary for this to happen. Your influence is more powerfully felt than you might imagine. You influence those around you just by being you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What works best is to play your original strategy and focus on the game you're in. If you try to play more than one game a time, all games will suffer. For most tasks of the week, there are enough challenges within one job to warrant your full attention. You'll be rewarded for going slowly and paying attention to each move.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Just because a fit is off doesn't mean you can't make a thing work. Square pegs get into round holes all the time. What matters more than the shape of a thing is the amount of it. Think in terms of effort and energy. In relationships, it's about how much of the real "you" you are able to bring into the situation and still feel accepted.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Once upon a time, you felt you didn't belong. Now it's a nonissue. While a lack of worry is certainly an indication that you feel accepted, it's still wonderful to get affirmations and niceties that tell you that you're appreciated. You will give and get such signals this week. Your heart is open, and you'll connect.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS: Your mind is open, and you assimilate knowledge with a unique bent, unparalleled by anyone around and admired by bright minds. You'll learn from mentors, peers and even from observing the natural world. But mostly, you'll learn from doing. Inner qualities sparkle, and you'll learn that you have the fortitude to make remarkable things happen in the world. More highlights: Comfortable, caring relationships will be a steadfast fixture. Your family will grow. You'll cash three big checks.

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Answers on P13

SUDOKU

HOW TO PLAY
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.
Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember. You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column or 3x3 box.

The Toughie

Answers on P13

- Across**
- Amino and nitric
 - Located along a central line
 - Kind of card in phones
 - Love in tennis
 - "J.F.K." director
 - Lawyer, abbr.
 - Fitness assoc.
 - Japanese martial art
 - Darn!
 - Super popular Brit. dish
 - Opposite of dep.
 - Junior's junior
 - N.F.L. Hall-of-Famer
- Hirsch**
- Diagonally
 - Grandpa Walton
 - French for nothing
 - Holed up
 - Potato dish version
 - Hurricane heading; abbr.
 - U.N. aviation agency
 - "Beloved" author Morrison
 - "Reservoir Dogs" director
 - Insight
 - Venture capitalists, abbr.
 - Baseball stat
 - Vegetarian dish
 - Enumerate
 - Makes a sad noise
 - Celtic singer
- Down**
- This, that or the other
 - Something to part with
 - Native Peruvian
 - Student overseer
 - Wedding proposer
 - Nissan SUV
 - Groups of atoms
 - Time __ half
 - Classic keyman Russell
 - As the crow flies
 - "Take __ a sign"
 - Don't believe it
 - Executive branch, informally
 - Jovial
 - Paul Anka's first hit
 - Everglades wader
 - First name in hoteliers
 - National Guard, for example
 - Bauxite, e.g.
 - Check for fit

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60				61					62		63
64				65					66		
67				68					69		

- Space
- Prefix with romantic
- Property claims
- Murphy of "Shrek"
- Belarus's capital
- Do something
- Bollywood film star
- Office address part, abbr.
- Bank holdings, abbr.
- Jane Eyre, e.g.
- Remain unused
- Small wooded areas
- Piece of jewelry
- School subj.
- "Hey, there!"
- "__ kleine Nachtmusik"
- Tommie of the "Miracle Mets"
- Lap dog, for short
- Don Juan's mother
- Observer
- As done by

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

1	S	L	E	W	6	O	U	R	8	N	A	10	P
11	H	I	G	H	12	U	S	E	13	O	W	E	
14	E	D	G	E	15	T	E	N	16	N	E	T	
				17	A	D	D	R	E	18	S	S	
20	T	A	T	21	T	O	22	W	I	23	T	24	C
25	H	U	H	26	N	O	27	R	28	T	I	L	E
29	U	N	I	31	R	E	32	D	33	C	U	E	
35	S	T	R	A	P	36	S	U	37	C	K	E	D
				38	T	R	A	P	39	P	E	D	
41	O	E	42	T	O	43	R	44	O	45	A	M	
48	A	R	E	49	I	N	50	O	51	N	C	E	
54	M	E	N	55	O	D	56	D	57	M	E	E	T

SUDOKU ANSWERS

8	1	5	7	4	3	6	9	2
9	6	4	1	8	2	5	7	3
3	2	7	5	9	6	8	1	4
5	7	3	8	1	9	2	4	6
1	9	6	4	2	5	7	3	8
4	8	2	6	3	7	1	5	9
7	3	9	2	5	8	4	6	1
6	4	8	9	7	1	3	2	5
2	5	1	3	6	4	9	8	7

TOUGHIE ANSWERS

1	A	C	I	D	5	A	X	I	A	9	S	I	M			
13	N	O	N	E	15	S	T	O	N	E	16	A	T	T		
17	Y	M	C	A	18	K	E	N	D	O	19	D	R	A	T	
21	B	A	N	G	22	E	R	S	A	N	23	D	M	A	S	H
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29	G	E	E	R	30	R	I	E	N	31	H	I	D			
33	R	O	S	E	34	A	R	Y	R	O	A	S	T	E	D	
37	E	N	E	38	I	C	A	O	39	T	O	N	I			
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49	C	H	I	C	K	50	P	E	A	P	O	T	P	I	E	
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61	P	T	S	62	T	E	E	N	S	63	E	Z	R	A		

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Robson Valley Music Festival fast approaching

By ANDREA ARNOLD

The 17th annual Robson Valley Music Festival August 16-18, 2024 is only five weeks away. A number that both excites and scares organizer and founder Shara Gustafson. “We have a lot to get done before opening day,” she said. “But I am excited to see the results.”

As in past years, the three day event has been scheduled full of a variety of musical groups and other entertainment geared to entertain the whole family.

Reknowned Bollywood dancer Karima Essa will once again be hosting a kids workshop. The young attendees will also be treated to their own musical performances, comedy, Puppets in the Move and Mini Circus Company.

There will be music and art workshops being held for adults throughout the weekend. The four performance stages will host a range of artists showcasing Afro Reggae, Roots Country, World Electronic, Swing, Metal, Bluegrass, Country, and Celtic.

The two headlining performers are traveling from New Zealand and Mexico.

Gustafson is excited to also feature Notorious Cree, traditional hoop and powwow dancer from Tall Cree First Nation in Northern Alberta.

Local artists that will be featured are Half Asian Amy the CODA, Ben Coyle, Dream Heavy Art, and John Crowley.

“Saeda Rose, our daughter, will be making her festival debut,” said Gustafson.

Camping on site is included in ticket purchases. The artisan village will showcase many local makers and the Country Girls Kitchen is joining the line up of food trucks.

Smoking is only permitted in designated areas, and alcohol will be available in the beer gardens.

The festival does not permit dogs other than service dogs.

Tickets can be purchased on the website <https://www.rvmf.ca/#/>. The site also contains a detailed schedule of events and artists information as well as camping information and location.

“Usually during the last week of July we see a sales spike,” said Gustafson.

Only weekend passes are available for sale. Sunday, visitors are welcome to attend for the day by donation, and seniors are free.

Organizers are still looking for volunteers for the weekend in a variety of roles. In exchange for 12 hours of service over the weekend, volunteers receive a t-shirt, weekend pass, free camping and one meal from the hospitality tent.

Although the preparation for the weekend can be stressful, Gustafson loves the family focused community that is built throughout the weekend.

“When it goes well, it’s the best feeling,” she said. “It is a gift to the community.

People come to celebrate art, music and being together. It’s great to see so many young families. It’s got such a family vibe now.”



The Ghostly Hounds, a B.C.-based folk project of Francesca Mirai who is often accompanied by Finn Letourneau on fiddle and vocal harmonies, is just one of the performers set to perform at the Robson Valley Music Festival. /SYDNEY WOODWARD

*Through the Lens
with Leon Lorenz*



When there is potential danger a mother black bear will send her little cubs scurrying up a tree for safety. This one (as well as 2 others in nearby trees) are waiting further instructions. /LEON LORENZ

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Six minutes Cont'd from P13

expendable afterthought. She loaded her medical supplies in her car and set about to secure our 10-year-old dog Indy, who would ride with her. Chris grabbed one of his guitars and loaded it and his computer into Dan's truck. Dan finished documenting the house and began to gather some tools and guitars. He quickly made sure the chickens had water and food.

I carried my computer to my car and searched for a tote to fill with pictures. As I loaded the albums from the closet, the lights went out. The house was as black as night, and I could no longer see what to grab. At that point the phone rang again with an immediate evacuation notification. There was no more time to retrieve belongings and we would depart with nearly empty vehicles.

Dan and Chris would lead the way out, Emily and Indy next, I would bring up the rear. As we pulled out of the driveway, I looked back at the house framed in the darkening sky. Ashes and embers were falling heavily now, trees and fuel tanks exploding and there was a growing roar of the wind driven fire. We pulled out slowly into the cul-de-sac, visually checking other houses. Our closest neighbor across the street was still hosing down his house, everyone else was gone or going. As we approached the intersection at Pentz, we could see the steady line of cars headed down the hill. It seemed to take forever for a break big enough for us to enter the roadway together. Instinctually I looked north toward Paradise to check for traffic. That's when I saw the wall of black smoke and fire barreling towards us. I absolutely panicked and started to cry and pray out loud that we wouldn't be overtaken and that we would all make it out together. We moved slowly and steadily with traffic for 12 miles, to a four-way stop near Butte college and then continued stop and go until we were over the freeway. Together we pulled off the road to collect our thoughts and look back at the huge black veil that covered the sky. I began to make calls to local hotels and secured a room in Redding for the next two nights (still hoping we would be able to go home within the next day or two). Dan wanted to check in at work and so we drove into Chico. I called friends of ours in north Chico to see if they knew what was going on. Immediately they told us to come and stay with them until the danger passed. Little did we know we would be spending the next 3 weeks with them as we awaited reentry.

Once we were allowed back to our property, we were able to begin the process of recovery. In short, there was nothing to recover. The fire burned so hot and fast there was nothing left. We had some hope after finding our three safes, but looters had beat us to the discovery. The gun safe had been raided of the barrels and remnants, our large personal safe had been pried open and left facing upward so that whatever had survived the heat was ruined by the rain and the small safe was likewise pried open and gutted. We spent a couple days with shovels and sifters looking for anything that survived but soon realized our attempts were futile.

As we picked through the piles of broken dishware, my mother-in-law's collection of State-plates, the Mikasa dinner set that my father-in-law sent back to his wife while serving as a Marine in Japan, mom's depression glass and Royal Copenhagen cups, I had an idea to collect some and make a mosaic. Somewhere during the treasuring, I picked up my melted Stealthcam trail camera that had been aimed at our side yard and I tossed it in the bucket.

I had discovered bear scat on our sidewalk and had hopes of capturing the animal rummaging through the compost bin or visiting the small pond. I drug a

wooden sawhorse down to the pond to mount it on, but the camera hung too low and at an awkward angle, so I opted to secure it to a coastal sequoia near the road. It faced our neighbor's fence, their roofline just visible through the trees, the black compost bin front and center, the bedraggled sawhorse, and another house to the right. The sidewalk and rock creek ran left to right in the frame.

The buckets of dish shards would be shuttled to our new residence in Red Bluff CA, then shuffled from the garage to the house while my husband made room there for a new motorcycle and tools. From the house they would move to the patio while we put in new flooring. They moved back inside last week so we could paint the house. We were making our new house a home; the buckets were in the way, and it was time to start the mosaic project that I had thought about 2 1/2 years ago. I came across the camera and asked Dan if he could get it open and see if the SD card was functioning. I had tried to bang it open once before, but at that point we didn't even own a hammer. It took some force, but he opened it and inserted the card into the laptop. What we saw was both amazing and unsettling.

Real time 9:37 am. The glow of the fire gets brighter as traffic doubles and moves steadily towards the 99 freeway.

Real time 9:38. The gridlocked freeway appears from the dimming light. We decide to take the back way into Chico. The sky turns black as embers float among the treetops. The flames hit the pavement blockade of the street and seem to die. The camera snaps a burst of five pictures during a minute of uncertainty.

Real time 9:39 am. We cross the overpass. All Hell breaks loose in the yard. Fire has likely reached the chicken coop and the back deck. two of my four chickens would survive the fire, one mercifully euthanized shortly after, the other, badly burned and missing her toes, did not survive much longer.

Real time 9:40 am. The compost bin is fully engulfed. A weeping blue atlas cedar tree and an ornamental pine ignite to the right of the screen.

Dan calls me and asks if we should take our chances on finding a hotel in Chico. We agree to pull over and start calling about vacancies.

Real time 9:42 am. Most certainly our house is on fire. We gather outside our vehicles; the wind whipping embers and ash around us and look back at the monstrous black cloud over Paradise.

Real time 9:44 am. The camera drops to the ground and captures the thick black smoke and embers in the treetops.

The camera valiantly snaps one last shot despite the lens and cover having melted inward.

It took 6 minutes for the fire to come over the fence and reach the camera, decimating our neighborhood. While it was sobering to discover these pictures, it was also fascinating and quite eye-opening to finally know what happened in those last moments. The day before the fire I wrote a quote on the blackboard at school, "Failure isn't fatal but hesitation can be." Little did I know how prophetic those words would be.

The Camp Fire remains one of the costliest, deadliest, and most destructive fires in California history. 85 people died that day, 2 people are still listed as missing, and there were dozens of injuries. Nearly 19,000 structures and over 150,000 acres (about 240 sq. miles) were burned. The fire moved so swift and hot that most of the damage occurred within the first 4 hours



Dunster resident Kerry Hall says it took six minutes for the 2018 California Camp Fire to completely decimate her Paradise neighborhood. After activating due to the approaching blaze, Hall's security camera captured the destruction before succumbing to the flames itself.

Above: the security camera upon activation
Middle: Approximately five minutes after the camera turns on, it captures the destruction of Hall's yard, with large Ponderosa pines igniting "like matchsticks."

Below: About one minute after the middle photo, Hall's yard is completely engulfed in flames. This is the last photo the camera captured of the yard before falling to the ground. /SUBMITTED

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Volunteers Needed

Valemount Community Forest Co. Ltd. and Valemount Industrial Park Co. Ltd.

Annual General Meeting

- **Date:** Thursday July 18th
- **Location:** Valemount Community Hall, 201 Gorse St.
- **Time:** Valemount Community Forest AGM will begin at 5:30pm, followed by the Valemount Industrial Park AGM at 6:15pm
- Refreshments provided

Tour the Valemount Specialty Mill

- Before the AGM come for a tour at the sawmill
- Meet at the Community Hall at 4:00pm
- Personal vehicle convoy to 555 Cedarside Road

Canoe Valley Recreation Centre Community Consultation Committee

Help make decisions in your community!

Two volunteer positions are currently available on the Community Consultation Committee for Valemount's Canoe Valley Recreation Centre.

Get involved by supporting this local service so decisions about the Canoe Valley Recreation Centre are made in the best interests of the community.

The deadline to register your interest in these positions is **August 2, 2024 at 12:00 pm.**

For more information, contact Cindy Paton at 1-800-667-1959 or communityservices@rdffg.bc.ca

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